Greek into Humanist Latin:

Foreignizing vs. domesticating translation in the Italian Quattrocento

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Abstract: *Fifteenth-century Italy witnessed an explosion both in the production of Latin translations from the Greek and in theoretical writings on translations. Nevertheless, humanist translation theory is more or less ignored by many modern translation specialists. In this article I draw attention to some frequent issues in fifteenth-century discussions of translation that show how Renaissance theoreticians addressed a number of the same questions as those raised in contemporary translation studies, for instance by Antoine Berman, Lawrence Venuti and Anne Coldiron. From the beginning of the fifteenth century there was among Italian humanists a discussion of what we today would call domesticating versus foreignizing translation. The father of humanist translation theory, the Byzantine Manuel Chrysoloras, advocated some kind of foreignizing translation in which the foreignness of the source language would remain visible and the reader made to move towards the author. However, humanist theoreticians increasingly began to favour domesticating translation, even developing a new terminology to describe their aims and methods.*

In his *De latinae linguae reparatione*, a dialogue from the end of the 1480s, the Venetian Marcantonio Sabellico celebrates the triumph of humanism through the restoration of classical Latin eloquence.[1] Sabellico, who is himself one of the interlocutors, sums up the main achievements of major fifteenth-century humanists. The first to be praised is Leonardo Bruni:

Text 1

> However, of all who lived at that time, Leonardus Aretinus is worthy of special praise. He excelled both in philosophy and eloquence, and he was no less famous as a historian […] There are various testimonies to his scholarship. His Latin versions of Greek texts clearly show his versatile intellect that could apply itself to differing

[1] For this, see Baker 2013 and Baker 2015, 184–233. For the dialogue, see also Krautter 1979, 635–646.

> subjects. Sometimes he is weighty and condensed, as in his translations of Basil […] and Xenophon's *Hiero*, and sometimes transparent and expansive as in the lives of Aemilius Paulus, Cato the Younger, Sertorius and the other Plutarchan lives he undertook. The result is such that there is nothing of worth in the original writer that he does not have too.[2]

Sabellico then remarks on how Bruni had rendered the stylistic qualities of other Greek authors whose works he had translated, before he mentions some of Bruni's original works.[3]

The paragraph on Bruni is no exception: if the writers included in the list had published any Latin translations, Sabellico considers them worthy of comment. With regard to Lorenzo Valla, for instance, pride of place is given to the *Elegantiae*, as one would expect in a work on the Latin language. However, as Sabellico stresses, Valla also followed his own precepts: with his translation of Herodotus, he so to speak made the ancient historian a Roman citizen, albeit one that might be surprised that the Muses had stopped speaking in Ionian (see below Text 2). Niccolò Perotti, who is hailed by Sabellico as second only to Valla as an authority on Latin, is praised for the clear and unrestrained style of his Latin Polybius and the gravity of his letters.[4] In short, in Sabellico's dialogue translation is invariably seen as a central part of the humanist project. Sabellico the critic not only mentions the translations of these humanists, he also discusses their individual merits. It seems that fifteenth-century translators were neither unnamed nor, as we shall see later, were they, in the literal sense of the word, invisible, thus standing in contrast to what modern translators have sometimes felt themselves to be.[5]

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[2] "Sed omnium qui sub id tempus extitere Leonardus Aretinus praecipua dignus laude occurrit, vir philosophiae studiis et eloquentia clarus, nec in historia minus celeber. […] Studiorum monumenta varia feruntur; quae ex graeco latina fecit manifeste arguunt quam facilis natura illa fuerit diversisque rebus accommodata: gravis nunc et densus, ut in Basilio […] et in Xenophontis Tyranno, nunc candidus ac fusus, ut in Aemilio, Catone, Sertorio et aliis quos ex Plutarcho acceperat, ut nulla sit in illo virtus quam in hoc aliquo modo desideres," SABELLICVS *repar* pp.99–100. When possible, I refer to Neo-Latin texts with the sigla used by Johann Ramminger in *Neulateinische Wortliste* (www.neulatein.de).

[3] SABELLICVS *repar* pp.100–102.

[4] "Nicolaus vero Perotus, Sipontinus antistes, post Laurentium, quem velut homericum illum Achillem semper excipiendum duxi, omnium quos diximus latinae elegantiae longe studiosissimus merito habetur. Nihil ipsius Polybio candidius, nihil minus elaboratum, quum elaboratissima alioqui omnia appareant," SABELLICVS *repar* pp.133–134.

[5] I shall discuss this concept below in the paragraph entitled *Fluency, transparency and (in)visibility.*

Sabellico's emphasis on translation as part of a humanist's *œuvre* is perhaps not surprising. As Réka Forrai points out in her article in this volume, the Latin West produced many translations during the Middle Ages, but fifteenth-century Italy witnessed a veritable explosion in Latin translations from the Greek, as well as in metadiscursive texts on translation. From the late fourteenth century on, there was also a reorientation of Greek studies, as texts not traditionally read in the Latin West began to attract attention:[6] by the middle of the century, Greek texts from an impressive range of 'new' genres had become available to Western readers in Latin translation or rewriting, among them satire, biography, epic, historiography, and rhetoric.[7] These new developments profoundly influenced contemporary metadiscourse on translation, such as paratextual comments in prefaces or treatises.

In spite of this, modern translation studies tend to ignore or overlook developments in humanist translation theory. In *After Babel*, George Steiner divided the literature on the theory, practice and history of translation into four periods. The first lasted for more than 1800 years, extending from Cicero and Horace up to the publication of Alexander Fraser Tytler's *Essay on the Principles of Translation* in 1792.[8] More recently, Susan Bassnett stated that one of the first writers to formulate a theory of translation was the French humanist Etienne Dolet (1509–46) – in the mid-sixteenth century![9] But not only was there a vivid interest in translation almost from the start of the humanist movement, there was actually a lot more at stake in humanist translation theory than the issues brought up in (Ps.) Cicero's *On the Best Kind of Orator* (§14), Horace's *Art of Poetry* (vv. 133–134) or Jerome's letter to Pammachius for that matter. Italian humanists discussed translation theory more than a hundred years before Dolet, whose treatise

[6] On the development of Greek studies in the second half of the fourteenth century, see DiStefano 1965 and 1968, the collected essays of Roberto Weiss in Weiss 1977, Hankins 2002, and the volume *Manuele Crisolora* 2002. See also Pade 2007, I, 66–96, Ciccolella 2008, 97–102

[7] With regard to the interest in Greek historiography, see Burke 1966, 135–152, and Pade & Osmond 1999, 154–165.

[8] Steiner 1975, 248–249. Steiner's rather high-handed treatment of humanist translation theory has been criticized, for instance, by Marassi 2009, 123.

[9] Bassnett 2014, 53. Dolet's treatise *La manière de bien traduire d'une langue en aultre,* was published in 1540. Incidentally, Eugene Nida, too, completely ignores the post-medieval Latin tradition in translation studies in his influential *Toward a Science of Translating*. In the chapter "The Tradition of Translation in the Latin World", he jumps from the twelfth century to Luther, mentioning also Dolet. Nida 1964, 14–16.

mentioned by Bassnett is in fact not much more than an abbreviated translation of a work by Leonardo Bruni.[10]

In what follows I shall highlight some frequent issues in fifteenth-century humanist writings on translation. I do not in any way purport to provide a panorama of humanist translation theory, but I hope to be able to show how Renaissance theoreticians addressed a number of the questions raised in contemporary translation studies. I also hope to demonstrate how reading the historical and the modern texts side by side may deepen our understanding of both. The concepts in modern translation studies that I have found especially helpful when reading humanist translation theory – and which I shall discuss in more detail later on – are: domesticating versus foreignizing translation (Friederich Schleiermacher, Lawrence Venuti, and Douglas Robinson), fluency, transparency and the invisibility of the translator (Venuti and Anne Coldiron), ethnocentric, annexionist translation (Antoine Berman and Venuti), stylistic analogue translation (Venuti), homophonic translation (Charles Bernstein), and equivalence (Eugene A. Nida and Venuti).

If we return to Sabellico's dialogue, what is remarkable is not just the prominence given to translation in a humanist's *œuvre*, it is also the way Sabellico judges individual translations. With both Bruni and Perotti he talks about the Latin style of the translation. This is important also in the case of Valla's Herodotus, but what is perhaps even more interesting is Sabellico's use of metaphors to convey the quality of Valla's work:

Text 2

> Read Herodotus, if you please, on whom *Valla* conferred citizenship. Let his spirit be called back from the Elysian fields and he himself be made to know Latin. Will he then deny that what he sees is his? Or will he acknowledge the rest as his own, especially the flowing style, but just wonder how it came about that the Muses, after whom he named his books, has stopped speaking Ionian?[11]

Sabellico here makes use of a widespread *topos* in humanist translation literature that is probably an allusion to Quintilian: the original author is given Roman citizenship, he gets to know Latin and somehow unlearns his

[10] Dolet's dependence on Bruni is discussed in Baldassarri 2003, 99 and n. 15.

[11] "Legite, si placet, Herodotum, quem ille civitate donavit: citentur ex Elisiis, ut poetae dicunt, campis ipsius Manes deturque latine scire; num negabit sua esse illa quae videat, an potius caetera agnoscens et in primis eximium candorem, tantum mirabitur Musas, quibus opus inscripserat, ionice desiisse loqui?" SABELLICVS *repar* pp.122–123.

mother tongue.[12] Or, to rephrase a famous sentence by the father of this notion in modern translation-studies discourse, Schleiermacher, the Greek author is not only moved towards his Latin readers, he moves in with them, whereas they do not move an inch to meet him.[13] What Sabellico describes is the result of what some would now call radical domestication. However, Sabellico wrote at the end of the fifteenth century; in the following I shall argue that in fact from the beginning of the century there was among Italian humanists a discussion of what we today, with the terminology coined by Lawrence Venuti, call domesticating versus foreignizing translation.[14]

Manuel Chrysoloras: a plea for foreignizing translation

The Byzantine diplomat and scholar, Manuel Chrysoloras, may be called the father of humanist translation.[15] He taught Greek at Florence around 1400 and his successful tenure effectively changed the course of Greek studies in the West. We mainly know about his views on translation through a pupil of his, Cencio de'Rustici, whose short description is often treated as the founding document of humanist translation theory. Cencio recalls that Manuel thought literal translation worthless and a very free translation apt to interpret rather than translate the original. He recommended a middle course:

Text 3

> Sed ad sententiam transferre opus esse aiebat hoc pacto ut ii qui huiusmodi rebus operam darent, legem sibi ipsis indicerent, ut nullo modo proprietas greca immutaretur.
>
> (Instead one should render meaning, he said. Those who took pains with matters of this sort should make it a rule for themselves not to alter the Greek *proprietas* in any way.)[16]

[12] The metaphorical use of the expression *aliquem civitate donare* (to confer citizenship on someone) is also found in Quintilian: "ut oratio Romana plane videatur, non civitate donata," (so that the style will seem completely Roman, and not to have been merely presented with Roman citizenship), QVINT. inst. 8,1,3. Sabellico, like Valla, was very fond of Quintilian, cp. Baker 2013, 211–212.

[13] In an 1813 lecture on different methods of translation, Schleiermacher famously said "there are only two. Either the translator leaves the author in peace as much as possible and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible, and moves the author towards him." Quoted from Lefevere 1977, 74.

[14] See Venuti's influential *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation*, Venuti 1995/2008.

[15] My discussion of Chrysoloras is based on Pade 2017a.

[16] Cincius Romanus, Preface to translation of Aelius Aristides, *Dionysius*, Constance 1416, in Bertalot, 1929–30/1975, 2, 133.

The word that interests me here – and which I think is the key to understanding Chrysoloras' point of view – is the one I have not translated, namely *proprietas*: the translator should do his outmost, "ut nullo modo proprietas greca immutaretur". *Proprietas* is used once more in the same passage, when Cencio relates Manuel's warnings against the overly free translation:

Text 4

> nam si quispiam, quo luculentius apertiusque suis hominibus loquatur, aliquid grece proprietatis immutarit, eum non interpretis sed exponentis officio uti. (*ibid.*)
>
> (For if anyone were to alter the Greek *proprietas* somehow, with the object of speaking better and more clearly to his own people, he would act the part of a commentator rather than that of a translator.)

Cencio's wording in many respects echoes the classical *loci* on translation, especially (Ps) Cicero's *On the best kind of orator* (§ 14), Horace's *Art of Poetry* (vv. 133–134), and the passage in Jerome's letter to Pammachius from which he quotes. But one word is odd, namely *proprietas*. Cencio uses it twice in five lines, but it is not in any of the three classical texts just mentioned.

According to the *Thesaurus linguae Latinae*, the word *proprietas* has a wide range of meanings, but in grammatical and rhetorical contexts it is often used to signify the relationship between signified and signifier, and the way words used correctly may express the special characteristic of the thing they denote.[17] Some of the examples quoted by Ottink regard translation or differences between Greek and Latin: commenting upon his own inability to translate a passage in Plato, Aulus Gellius said that Latin cannot possibly hope to represent the *proprietates* of the Greek original accurately: "ad proprietates eorum nequaquam possit Latina oratio adspirare" (*Att.* 10,22,3). In his commentary on Psalm 54, Hilarius, bishop of Poitiers, remarked that the Latin *praecipita* did not express the *proprietas* of the Greek original ("proprietatem verbi […] graeci [*sc.* καταπόντισον] latinitas […] non elocuta est," HIL. *in psalm*. 54, 11; Hilarius was commenting on the translation made from the old Greek version). Jerome mentioned that Lucas had realized that he would not be able to render properly the *proprietas* of the Hebrew *osianna* in the Gospel ("(*Lucas*) se vidit proprietatem sermonis [*sc. 'osianna'*] transferre non posse," HIER. *epist.* 20,4,4). Similarly, in the

[17] Ottink 2004, § B1aα: *de ratione, quae intercedit inter verba et res iis significatas: usu communi spectat ad verba proprie posita, quae res suas significant secundum naturam, notionem primariam.*

preface to his translation of Eusebius' *Chronicle*, Jerome again uses *proprietas* about a quality that is difficult or almost impossible to render in translation:

Text 5

Significatum est aliquid unius uerbi proprietate: non habeo meum quo id efferam, et dum quaero implere sententiam, longo ambitu uix breuis uiae spatia consummo, (HIER *chron*. *epist*. 2,6–9)

(A meaning may be conveyed by the *proprietas* of a single word: but in my vocabulary I have no comparable word; and when I try to accommodate the full sense, I take a long detour around a short course.)[18]

In the examples quoted here, *proprietas* is used about a quality of the original, not just the actual phrasing, but also the concept it denotes. In the Gellius quotation, it seems to refer mostly to the wording, whereas in the two examples from Jerome it rather denotes the concept. I believe that this is how the word is also used by Chrysoloras/Cencio, that is, to denote the Greek innate quality or the special Greek characteristic of the original, both with regard to phrasing and content. According to Chrysoloras/Cencio, the *proprietas graeca* may be almost impossible to render in Latin, but one must none the less attempt to maintain it at all costs.

Even though it is so prominent in Cencio's text, the word *proprietas* did not really become a stable part of the lexicon of humanist translation studies. The reason for this, I believe, is that subsequent translation theoreticians, with Leonardo Bruni leading the way, were far more focused on the target language or culture. Or in other words, I believe that Chrysoloras, who was a proud representative of Greek culture, advocated what we today would call a foreignizing translation that would keep as many as possible of the Greek original's characteristics. The one translation into Latin we have of his, the version of Plato's *State* which he undertook in collaboration with Uberto Decembrio, bears witness to this.[19] All technical terms for political institutions are left in transliteration, with no attempt to find a Latin equivalent. Chrysoloras' Italian followers, on the other hand, more intent on enriching humanist Latin culture, wanted to import the original into that culture, that is to produce totally domesticating translations. They actually developed a new vocabulary and refined imagery to describe their goal.

[18] Translation based on Copeland 1991, 47.
[19] For this translation, see Hankins 1987.

Leonardo Bruni: a call for domesticating translation

Leonardo Bruni, perhaps Chrysoloras' most successful student, wrote repeatedly about translation. It has sometimes been assumed that he more or less systematized and expanded upon Chrysoloras' theory to which he had been exposed during classes. However, though Bruni agrees with Chrysoloras in several respects he also demonstrates important differences. Some critics see Bruni as an adherent of almost literal translation, but I cannot agree with that.[20] It is true that in his famous 1404 letter to Niccolò Niccoli that came to function as a preface to his translation of Plato's *Phaedo*, he says that if possible he willingly renders the Greek original word for word. However, I believe that the operative term here is 'if possible', for Bruni stresses that a literal translation must only be attempted if the result is without awkwardness or harshness.[21] Chrysoloras actually warned against word for word translation, because the result would be harsh, so I think we may safely conclude that Bruni here is in line with his views. However, where Chrysoloras said that good translation should at all cost maintain the *proprietas graeca*, Bruni heads in another direction. In an often-quoted passage, he describes Plato's stylistic qualities at length saying that this is how Plato is in Greek, and that is what he will try to import into the Latin world, because

Text 6

> Plato himself asks me to do that, for a man who among the Greeks presented a most elegant countenance surely does not want to appear crude and clumsy among the Latins.[22]

Some years later, in the 1417 preface to his Latin translation of Aristotle's *Nichomachaean Ethics*, Bruni uses similar imagery to explain why a new translation of the text was needed:

Text 7

> If *Aristotle* now has any idea about what is going on here, one must assume that he has long been enraged at the harshness and awkwardness of the [medieval] translation and that, offended by such

[20] For instance Marassi 2009, 125.

[21] "Deinde si verbum verbo sine ulla inconcinnitate, aut absurditate reddi potest, libentissime omnium id ago," BRVNI *ep* 1,8 M. = 1,1 L.

[22] "hoc enim ipse Plato praesens me facere jubet, qui cum elegantissimi oris apud Graecos sit, non vult certe apud Latinos ineptus videri," BRVNI *ep* 1,8 M. = 1,1 L. For a discussion of Bruni's letter in the context of humanist translation theory, see Pade 2016, 3–8.

> barbarism, he denies the books are his. For he wants to appear among the Latins as he showed himself to the Greeks.[23]

As James Hankins put it: "Bruni wanted to pull his Greek author into the Latin world, to imagine how he would have written had Latin been his native language".[24] That had definitely not happened with the medieval translation, with its uncouth, barbarous Latin. One kind of barbarism, or foreignizing aspect of the medieval translation that Bruni repeatedly criticizes is the transliteration of Greek words. For instance, in his treatise on correct translation from the 1420s, Bruni explicitly warns against leaving anything in Greek in the translation.[25]

It is probably in the 1404 letter to Niccoli, in the same passage as the one quoted above (see Text 6), that Bruni first coined a hugely successful neologism of sense, namely *traducere* for to translate, a meaning the verb never had in ancient Latin. In the earliest texts where Bruni uses *traducere* in this way, the metaphor is still clearly visible, as it is here:

> **Text 8**
>
> ego autem Platoni adhereo quem ego ipse mihi effinxi et quidem latine scientem, ut iudicare possit, testemque eum adhibeo traductionis sue, atque ita traduco ut illi maxime placere intelligo.
>
> (I stay close to Plato – I have imagined him knowing Latin, so that he can form his own judgement, and I use him as an authoritative witness of his move [*into Latin*]; and I lead him over [*into Latin, i.e.*, translate] as I understand pleases him best.)[26]

Spatial metaphors and domesticating translation

It could be said that one of the most important coinages in fifteenth-century humanist Latin, *traducere* as used by Bruni, does itself announce the stance many humanists had towards translation: the foreign text should be imported into their world, it should be domesticated. Bruni and many other humanist translators clearly preferred the second of Schleiermacher's

[23] "si quis illi nunc sensus est rerum nostrarum, iampridem credendum est <eum> huic absurditati et inconcinnitati traductionis infensum et tantam barbariem indignatum hos suos libros esse negare, cum talis apud Latinos videri cupiat, qualem apud Graecos sese ipse exhibuit," BRVNI *praef Aristoteles eth Nicom* p. 158. *Eum* is added by Baron 1928, 77.

[24] James Hankins in Griffiths, Hankins & Thompson 1987, 10.

[25] "ut […] non mendicet illud aut mutuo sumat aut in Graeco relinquat ob ignorantiam Latini sermonis," BRVNI *interpr* p.85. Bruni wrote the treatise between 1424 and 1426.

[26] For Bruni's coinage, see Ramminger 2015-2016. I here quote Ramminger's translation of the passage, *ibid.* p. 38.

translation strategies: they moved the author towards the reader (see above n. 13).

Spatial metaphors similar to that inherent in *traducere* are frequent in fifteenth-century writings on translation: Guarino Veronese said that Chrysoloras led Greek letters, which had long been exiled from Latium, back to the Latins,[27] and Guarino himself, in his translation of Plutarch's *Lysander & Sulla*, leads the eponymous heroes from Athens to Ferrara,[28] while in his translation of Plutarch's *Philopoemen*, he makes the Greek join the other half of the Plutarchan pair, Flaminius, of whose company he had previously robbed Philopoemen.[29] Francesco Barbaro, too, in his translation of Plutarch's life leads Cato back from exile and gives Aristides, the Greek half of the pair, both Roman citizenship and Latin literacy.[30] Later in the century Alamanno Rinuccini makes the Spartan king Agesilaus come to the Latins.[31] A more brutal variant of the image of citizenship is found in the military imagery used by Lorenzo Valla with regard to his Latin translation of Thucydides: he compares himself, and the other translators employed by Pope Nicholas V, to commanders sent out by a Roman emperor to subject a new province to Roman rule.[32] The desired result of this domesticating process is described beautifully by Nicholas himself in a letter where he praises Niccolò Perotti's Latin translation of Polybius: the translation was so excellently done that Polybius' *Histories* seemed never to have been Greek![33]

In favour of foreignization

There were, however, dissenting voices. The writers I have quoted so far all belong to the core group of fifteenth-century humanists, but other

[27] "(*Chrysoloras,*) qui profugas dudum ex Latio litteras grecas ex innata liberalitate reducens ad nostrates", GVARINO *praef Plutarch vitae* 18,1, c. 1412.

[28] "Duo illustres uiri …, Lysander et Sulla comes, quos mediis ex Athenis tibi deduco," GVARINO *praef Plutarch vitae* 12,1, *a.* 1435.

[29] "*Philopoemen* meam tacitus implorare fidem uisus est, ut cum superiori tempore Titum Flaminium aequalem suum et honoris aemulum Latinum fecissem et socium distraxissem, solum ac destitutum se nequamquam esse paterer," GVARINO *praef Plutarch vitae* 8,1, *a.* 1416–18.

[30] "intra paucos dies Aristidem […] non ciuitate sed quod amplius est Latinis litteris donare, et Catonem illum grauissimum longo ut aiunt postliminio ad nostros homines reducere mihi licuerit," BARBARO-F *praef Plutarch vitae* 9,1, *a*. 1416.

[31] "Plutarchi Agesilaum, tuo nomine ad Latinos uenientem," RINVCCINI *praef Plutarch vitae* 17,1, *a*. 1462.

[32] See Pade 2016, 3.

[33] "Tanta enim facilitate et eloquentia transfers ut historia ipsa nunquam graeca sed prorsus latina semper fuisse uideatur", Nicholas V, letter to Perotti, 29.8.1452, quoted from Vat. lat. 1808, f. 1v.

intellectual communities clearly had different standards. A well-known example of this is the fierce opposition to Leonardo Bruni's 1417 translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Referring to Cicero's praise of Aristotle's stylistic qualities, Bruni had translated the work into elegant, Ciceronian Latin, in the process dispensing with the technical vocabulary of the medieval translation, and with it the transliterated terms for Greek political institutions. This was implicitly an attack on the scholastics, who based their teaching on the existing translations, like for instance the thirteenth-century translation of the *Ethics* by Robert Grosseteste. In a heated exchange of letters, Alonso of Cartagena, bishop of Burgos, accused Bruni's translation of lacking philosophical precision, exactly because it gave up on the Greek technical vocabulary, aiming to supplant it with perfectly idiomatic Latin. To Alonso, Latinity was less important than unequivocal terminology, foreign or not.[34] But also writers that we today count as humanists could argue that foreignization was an option. One of Guarino's very first translations was of Isocrates' *To Demonicus* (1405), a very popular political treatise. Citing Quintilian who had acknowledged this procedure amongst the ancients, Guarino admitted in his preface that he was prepared to retain Greek words in his translations if Latin equivalents were not available, for instance *monarchia* or *democratia*.[35] Like Bruni, Guarino was a student of Chrysoloras' and perhaps an even greater admirer of his teacher. Though Guarino on occasion would experiment with extremely domesticating translation strategies (see below Text 11), for a political text like *To Demonicus* he accepted the use of transliterated technical vocabulary, although the effect would be foreignizing. Moreover, Guarino actually coined a number of very successful loanwords from the Greek that he first used in translations. One is still with us in, I believe, most European languages, namely *myriad* meaning 10.000 or 'an indefinitely great number'. Guarino first used it in 1412 and considerately announced the novelty in the margin of the manuscript.[36]

I suspect further studies may reveal that the humanists' views on domesticating versus foreignizing translation strategies tended to vary

[34] For the controversy, see Hankins 2001 and 2003.

[35] GVARINO *ep* 1,5, quoting Quintilian *inst*. 1,5,8: "et concessis quoque graecis, inquit, utimur verbis, ubi nostra desint" (and we admittedly use Greek words where no Latin terms are available). On Guarino's views, see McLaughlin 1995, 117. It is almost tautological to say that humanist translators generally agree with Bruni's views on Latin style as a criterion of value. Regarding the vexed question of what actually constitutes the core characteristic of Renaissance humanism, modern scholarship increasingly points to the linguistic focus of the movement. There is an important discussion of this in Baker 2015, 234–240.

[36] Pade 2006, 255–256.

according to the genre in question. However, many of the new popular genres – historiography, epideictic rhetoric, biography – seemed to call for strongly domesticating translation, and the humanist translators were often very good at it, as we saw with Perotti's Latin Polybius that "seemed never to have been Greek" (see above n. 33). This appropriative attitude towards the Greek cultural heritage did not go unnoticed among the Greeks themselves. In fact, representatives of the source culture protested about the 'ethnocentric' violence, to use Venuti's term, their authors were subjected to.[37] One of them was Michael Apostolis, an impoverished Greek teacher, who indignantly wrote that:

Text 9

> if someone were to say that the Italian teachers translate Greek into their own language and manner very ably and appropriately, what does this have to do with the Greeks and their learning? It is rather a great offence which deserves strong penalties. In this way they are trying gradually to obliterate the Greek language, and have practically made the Greeks into Romans.[38]

Other modern scholars have discussed 'ethnocentric' violence in translation: Antoine Berman talked about "ethnocentric, annexionist translations […] where the play of deforming forces is freely exercised."[39] Economic interest may easily lead first-world translators and publishers to adopt an 'annexionist' approach towards the texts of 'postcolonial' writers. Taking her own translation of Raja' al-Sani''s *Banat al-Riyadh* (*Girls of Riyadh*) as a case study, Marilyn Booth argued that revisions made to her translation in the course of publication had domesticated the text and toned down the social criticism posed in the novel.[40]

Fluency, transparency and (in)visibility

What Apostolis called obliterating the Greek language and making the Greeks into Romans (see Text 9) would in modern translation studies be

[37] Venuti 1995/2008, 16.

[38] "Εἰ δέ τις φαίη τοὺς 'Ρωμαίων πορθμέας εὐθέτως καὶ ὡς προσήκει διερμηνεύειν τὸν ἕλληνα ἐς τὴν σφετέραν φώνην τε καὶ συνήθειαν, τί τοῦτο πρὸς Ἕλληνας καὶ σοφίαν αὐτῶν; μᾶλλον μὲν οὖν καὶ ἀδικία μεγίστη καὶ πολλῶν ἀξία τιμωρίων. τούτῳ δὴ τῷ τρόπῳ κατὰ μικρόν τἀκείνων ἀφανίζειν ἐπιχειροῦσι, καὶ οὕτως ἀνθ' Ἑλλήνων ὅσον οὐκ ἤδη 'Ρωμαίους πεποιήκασι," quoted from Botley 2004, 168. English translation by Paul Botley, *ibid*.

[39] Berman 1985/2004, 278.

[40] See Booth 2008. Her translation was published by Penguin in 2007.

called transparency. According to Venuti, this is achieved in a translation when

Text 10

> the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text – the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the 'original'. The illusion of transparency is an effect of a fluent translation strategy, of the translator's effort to insure easy readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous syntax, fixing a precise meaning […] the effect of transparency conceals the numerous conditions under which the translation is made, starting with the translator's crucial intervention. The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text.[41]

Whereas modern translation critics, and not least Venuti, have repeatedly encouraged visibility in translation and felt that foreignization should be a way to proceed, humanist translators generally did not feel the need, perhaps because of the extraordinary prestige they enjoyed.[42] As Coldiron recently pointed out, there have been moments in the history of translation where visibility was in fact promoted, among them the early modern period, when the admiration for *imitatio* and stylistic brilliance drew readers' attention to the translators' ability.[43] However, humanist translators were keenly aware that transparency, "the appearance that *a translation* reflects the foreign writer's personality" (see above Text 10), was an illusion and they addressed the question of how to create it. They certainly aimed at fluency, but they expected readers to recognize the skill it took to achieve it. In the following I shall discuss two translation strategies that have been explored both by contemporary and humanist translators, but viewed slightly differently in the two periods. The two examples tell us, I believe, that the risk of invisibility was perceived as less imminent by humanist translators.

In his 2002 translation of the Italian poet Antonia Pozzi, Venuti introduced the 'stylistic analogue'. He postulated an analogy between her work and some contemporary Anglo-American writers, exploiting the

[41] Venuti 1995/2008, 1.

[42] The notion of invisibility and, by implication, visibility in translation is introduced in Venuti 1995. Subsequently, the concept came to play an important role in the field of translation studies, as shown by Emmerich 2013.

[43] Coldiron 2012, 190.

analogy on both the visual and phonetic levels in his translation.[44] However, the notion of the stylistic analogue may also, I feel, be seen as radically domesticating, and if we examine the way it was used in humanist translation, I believe it was.

When Bruni tries to explain the stylistic grasp translators ought to have with regard to both source and target language, he illustrates his points by describing the distinctive style of three Roman writers his readers would be utterly familiar with, namely Cicero, Sallust and Livy.[45] The good translator would be able to preserve or, rather, impose that style. Subsequent translators would accept the obligation of initial stylistic analysis, and the solution of how to render the original's stylistic characteristics could be the 'stylistic analogue': if an analogy was known to exist between the Greek work and a Latin author, that author could be imitated in the translation. In the preface to his 1452 translation of Thucydides, Lorenzo Valla quotes Cicero's and Quintilian's analysis of Thucydides' style, adding that Sallust was known to have been an imitator of the Greek historian. In the translation itself, Valla in fact often renders Thucydides' Greek with analogous phrases from Sallust, sometimes even remarking upon the procedure in the margin of his manuscript.[46] Valla clearly wanted readers to recognize and admire the intertextuality between his translation and its hypotext.[47] Guarino Veronese provides us with another and rather radical example of this procedure. In 1427 he translated part of Homer's *Odyssey* for a friend, to whom he explained that

Text 11

> some [*of the lines*] I translated almost literally, but there were passages where I more or less summed up the content, as I have seen that our Virgil often did.[48]

Virgil of course was known for his imitation of Homer, so to use his style was to use a 'stylistic analogue' and the result would have been a radically domesticated version of the passage in Homer.

Douglas Robinson has argued that 'radical domestication' would make readers aware of the interpretative work that translation involves – and thus

[44] Pozzi 2002.

[45] BRVNI *interpr.* p.87.

[46] Pade 2010 and 2016, 8–9.

[47] For intertextuality in translation, see Pade 2013, 31–33 and 2014, 357–360 and the essays by Morini and Wegener in this collection.

[48] "nonnulla ex verbo ferme converti, quaedam summatim exposui, quod a Virgilio nostro factitatum animadverti," GVARINO *ep.* 408 (*a.* 1427). For Guarino's stance in the letter, see Pade 2014, 354–355.

highlight the role of the translator.[49] In this light it is interesting that both Valla and Guarino proudly announced their translation strategies to their readers, revealing the complex analysis that had led to the finished translation. Robinson traced the genealogy of this approach back to include Martin Luther's treatment of the New Testament in German. However, Luther's famous *Sendbrieff* owes much to fifteenth-century Italian translation theory.[50] For a humanist translator, 'radical domestication', as we have seen, necessarily involves *imitation* (see for instance Text 11). The strategy is described in many humanist texts on translation, and it is easy to find examples of it in practice.

The second strategy I want to draw attention to is the so-called 'homophonic translation' that aims at fidelity to the aural aspect of the original. 'Homophonic translation' is now seen as something that destabilizes notions of transparency or unproblematic equivalence in translation, thus making the translator more visible.[51] Again, this strategy was at least tentatively explored in humanist translation. Confident that the expressive powers of Latin easily equal those of Greek, Bruni not only required the good translator to take prose rhythm and literary polish into consideration, he also showed how, in a passage from Plato's *Phaedrus* (237b), he was able exactly to render in Latin the prose rhythm of the original.[52] Clearly, for Bruni 'homophonic translation' did not in any way problematize equivalence, but I am certain that he would expect readers to recognize this *tour de force*; the brilliance of the translator would not go unnoticed.

Reception

Some of the strategies explored by humanist translators – imitation (see above Text 11), *aemulatio* (see below Text 13), intertextuality (see above and n. 47) – involved a notable degree of independence *vis à vis* the original, privileging the role of the translator over the author. They also involved a keen awareness of the reception of the original. For Venuti the fact that a text accrues significance when it begins to circulate in its original culture is an insurmountable obstacle that prevents a translation from producing on its reader an effect even similar to that produced by the original on the source-culture reader. Layers of significance are created through a variety of media

[49] Robinson 1997, 95.
[50] Pade 2016, 17.
[51] Bernstein 2011.
[52] BRVNI *interpr* p.87–89. On Bruni's discussion of prose rhythm in translation see also Baldassarri 2003, 100 and Pade forthcoming.

"ranging from paratextual elements […] to commentary […] to derivative works […]." The accumulated significance

Text 12

> is necessary for the signifying process of the foreign text, for its capacity to support meanings, values, and functions which therefore never survive intact the transition to a different language and culture. Thus the notion of an equivalent effect – that a translation can produce for its reader an effect that is similar to or the same as the effect produced by the foreign text for the foreign language reader – describes an impossibility: it ignores the manifold loss of contexts in any translation.[53]

Other scholars have argued differently, notably Eugene Nida, who talked about dynamic equivalence that was the "quality of a translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the response of the receptor is essentially like that of the original receptors."[54]

I do not know of any reflections in humanist translation theory on the possibility, or impossibility, of a translation taking into account a text's reception in its original culture – though translators often consulted Greek commentaries or glosses pertaining to the text they worked on: Bruni, for instance, studied Byzantine commentaries for his translations on Aristotle and Valla even translated Greek glosses into his Latin Thucydides and Greek commentaries into the margins of his manuscript.[55] But many Greek texts had had a notable reception in classical Latin literature, and here the situation is very different indeed. I have already mentioned how Valla explained some of his translation choices by pointing out Sallust's imitation of Thucydides, a trait that was often remarked upon by Roman literary criticism. Likewise, in the preface to his translation of Polybius, Niccolò Perotti discussed Livy's extended use of the Greek historian, also describing some of their stylistic differences. One is that whereas Polybius preferred indirect discourse, Livy favoured direct speech. In his translation, then, Perotti endeavours to take into account the Livian adaptation of Polybius' style, on occasion transforming the Greek indirect discourse into direct speech, even adding apostrophes. In the case of Thucydides and Polybius, their reception in Roman literature explains some stylistic features in the

[53] Venuti 2009, 159.

[54] Nida & Taber 1969, 200. Nida would later talk about functional equivalence.

[55] Bruni studies the Byzantine commentator Eustratius, cp. Hankins 2003, 199. For Valla's translation of Greek glosses, see Pade 2000, 271–276.

translations themselves.[56] When, some years before the Thucydides, Valla took on Demosthenes' masterpiece, *Pro Ctesiphonte* (*On the crown*), he clearly saw the ancient and modern reception of the text not just as a layer of meaning to be taken into account, but as a challenge.[57] It was then believed that Cicero had translated it, and Valla was of course aware of Bruni's 1407/1421 version. He acknowledged Bruni's mastery as a translator, admiringly saying that where he had surpassed all others in his earlier translations, in the *Pro Ctesiphonte* he had surpassed himself.[58] However, that only spurred Valla to greater efforts and he set out to compete with three great orators, Leonardo Bruni, Cicero, and Demosthenes:[59]

Text 13

> [I emulate] Leonardo, intending to reach the same goal by a different road; Cicero, hoping to steer the same course as he claimed to have done; and Demosthenes, to make sure that, if at all possible, he is not, through me, made to speak Latin any worse than he spoke Greek on his own.[60]

Neither Thucydides, nor Polybius, nor Demosthenes was read in the Latin West during the Middle Ages, but Aristotle certainly was. Not only were his works discussed in classical Roman literature, large parts of his *œuvre* were extant in medieval Latin translations, and there was a huge corpus of commentaries. All this, I believe, is reflected in Bruni's translations from

[56] Pade 2008, 87 and 96–98, and Pade 2016, 10–11.

[57] For Valla's translation of the speech, see Lo Monaco 1986 and 2008.

[58] "Ita enim fere constat, in aliis translationibus a Leonardo omnes, in hac autem etiam ipsum a se fuisse superatum. Adeo omnem vim Demosthenis nitoremque expressit et quemadmodum si Ciceronis extaret illa conversio hic non scripsisset, ita post se scribendum non esse<t>, qui fecit ne Tullianam magnopere desideremus," Lo Monaco 1986, 162. For Bruni's translation, see Accame Lanzillotta 1986.

[59] The spurious *De optimo genere oratorum* (current as early as Asconius) presents itself as Cicero's preface to his translation of the *Pro Ctesiphonte* and the opposing speech by Aeschines – also translated by Bruni. The famous passage, "Converti enim ex Atticis duorum eloquentissimorum nobilissimas orationes inter seque contrarias, Aeschini et Demostheni; nec converti ut interpres, sed ut orator, sententiis isdem et earum formis tamquam figuris, verbis ad nostram consuetudinem aptis," (*opt. gen.* 14), was quoted *verbatim* in St Jerome's letter to Pammachius (§ 5).

[60] "nunc ad emulationem trium maximorum oratorum me exerceo: Leonardi, Ciceronis, Demosthenis. Leonardi quidem ut alio itinere secum ad metam perveniam; Ciceronis vero, ut quem cursum tenuisse se dicit eundem ego teneam; Demosthenis autem ut non peius loquatur per me latine, si fas est, quam per se grece," Lo Monaco 1986, 163. As stated by Regoliosi 2001, 456–461 it is the *emulatio* of the original that for Valla makes translation a worthwhile exercise.

Aristotle. It is well known how he defended the high rhetorical style of his translation of the *Ethics* by pointing out that Cicero had praised Aristotle's style.[61] He deliberately rejected many aspects of the medieval translations, but consistently adopted the terminology of scholastic commentaries for political institutions.[62] In doing so he preserved in his translation one layer of meaning accumulated by Aristotle's text in its long life.

Conclusions

Humanist translation theory, and practice, clearly addressed some of the same issues that loom large in modern translation studies, for example, foreignizing versus domesticating translation, and strategies to achieve transparency, such as the stylistic analogue. Visibility, however, such a concern for Lawrence Venuti, is rarely mentioned by humanist translators. There is probably a good reason for that. As is clear from Sabellico's *On the restoration of Latin* that I mentioned at the beginning of this article (see Texts 1 and 2), translation and translators were held in high esteem in fifteenth-century Italy. Translators announced their translation strategies in prefaces, letters, treatises, and in commentaries on their own translations. They openly proclaimed the creativity of the translator, the *inventio* involved in his work, and they even, as we saw with Valla, worked in open competition with the original. From a material viewpoint, too, fifteenth-century translators were definitely visible. We find their portraits in manuscript copies of the work, sometimes with, but perhaps more often without a portrait of the original author, and many contemporary manuscripts contain collections of translations by a specific humanist, rather than translations of a specific author.[63] There was hardly any need to fight invisibility.

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[61] "Atqui studiosum eloquentiae fuisse Aristotelem et dicendi artem cum sapientia coniunxisse et Cicero ipse multis in locis testatur et libri eius summo cum eloquentiae studio luculentissime scripti declarant," BRVNI praef *Aristoteles eth Nicom*.

[62] For this see, Pade 2017b. However, Bruni may have been convinced that the terminology was classical, cp. BRVNI *ep* 10,24 M.

[63] It is easy to find manuscript copies of translations with the translators' portrait in the marvellous collection of digitized manuscripts published by the Vatican Library: http://www.mss.vatlib.it/gui/scan/link.jsp. One example is Urb. lat. 337 with Lorenzo Valla's Latin version the *Pro Cthesiphonte*, another is Urb. lat. 449 that contains Pier Candido Decembrio's Latin translation of Appianus. In both manuscripts, the portrait of the translator is in the illuminated initial of the dedicatory letter. Examples of manuscripts containing collections of translations by a specific humanist may be found in Pade 2007, II, in the chapter "List of Manuscripts Containing Latin Translations of Plutarch's Lives and related texts". See for example BERLIN, Staatsbibliothek, Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, lat. fol. 495, and lat. qu. 451, both with translations by Bruni.

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